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CHICKEN LICE

How To Control Them

Leaflet No. 474

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CHICKEN LICE:

How To Control Them

Lice irritate chickens, and sometimes kill them. They cause the birds to lose weight. Heavy infestations of lice may reduce egg production as much as 10 to 20 percent.

You can control chicken lice by applying insecticide to the birds and to the interiors of chickenhouses.

KINDS OF LICE

Two kinds of lice—bloodsucking and biting—attack animals. Only biting lice attack chickens. The head louse (*Cuclotogaster heterographus*) and the three body lice (*Menacanthus stramineus*, *M. cornutus*, and *M. pallidulus*) are the most common species. The head louse is especially injurious to young birds, and is more difficult to control.

Other biting lice that attack chickens include the following:

Shaft louse (*Menopon gallinae*)

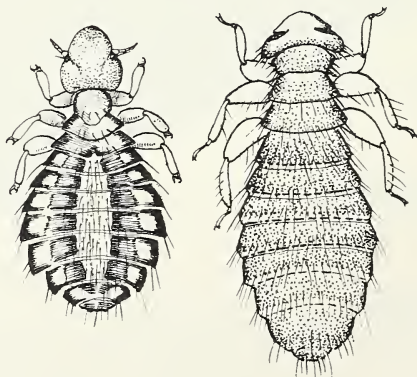
Wing louse (*Lipeurus caponis*)

Fluff louse (*Goniocotes gallinae*)

Large chicken louse (*Goniodes gigas*)

Brown chicken louse (*Goniodes dissimilis*)

The methods outlined in this leaflet for control of lice on chickens are effective against all these lice.



Head louse.

A body louse.

BN-10917



PN-794

Parting a chicken's feathers to find lice.

DEVELOPMENT

Female lice lay their eggs on a chicken's feathers. A gluey substance holds the eggs in place. They hatch in a few days to 2 weeks.

A newly hatched louse is transparent. As it grows, it molts (sheds its skin) several times, and color comes to its body. It is full grown 2 weeks after hatching.

Adult lice vary in shape and size, according to species. They feed on parts of the feathers and on scales of the skin.

CONTROL

Inspect your flock regularly. Apply an insecticide if the birds are infested with lice.

Several insecticides are effective for delousing chickens. Some can be applied as roost paints; others as sprays, dusts, or dips.

Treating the Birds

When spraying or dusting chickens on wire, apply the insecticide both over the backs and from beneath to insure effective penetration and coverage. Spray or dust at night when the birds are quiet.

Spraying

Spray the chickens individually or in groups. Use a spray containing 0.5 percent of malathion, 0.25 percent of coumaphos, 0.5 percent of carbaryl, or 0.3 percent of naled. To prepare the spray, purchase an emulsifiable concentrate or wettable powder and mix it with water. Directions on the label will tell you how to attain the desired strength.

Use a garden sprayer or power sprayer to apply malathion, naled, or coumaphos. Apply carbaryl only as a water mist spray.

One gallon of spray should be enough to treat about 100 chickens. Do not use coumaphos more often than once a week. Do not use coumaphos spray on birds within 10 days of vaccination or other stress influence. Do not use carbaryl within 7 days of slaughter.

Dusting

Recommended dusts and their strengths are: malathion, 4 or 5 percent; carbaryl, 5 percent; coumaphos, 0.5 percent; and rotenone, 1 percent. Dusts are ready to use when purchased.

You can apply one of these dusts with a shaker can when dusting birds individually. Shake dust into feathers of each bird until the dust reaches the skin.

Use a plunger- or rotary-type hand duster on the entire flock. One pound of dust should treat 100 chickens.

Do not use coumaphos more often than once a week. Do not use coumaphos dust on birds within 10 days of vaccination or other stress influence. Do not use carbaryl less than 7 days before slaughter. Do not apply naled on birds less than 6 weeks old.

Dipping

Chickens may be treated in a dip containing 0.5 percent of malathion. Prepare the dip by mixing an emulsifiable concentrate or wettable powder in water. Directions on the label will tell you how to attain the desired strength.

Dip only on warm days and wear rubber gloves.

Treat each bird separately, as follows:

1. Hold wings over its back, using one hand.
2. Immerse the bird.
3. Remove bird from the dip, allowing excess dip to drain off. Keep each bird in the dip 20 to 30 seconds.



PN-795

Spraying the birds.



PN-796

Dusting the birds.

Treating Roosts and Chickenhouse

You can spray, dust, or paint insecticide on roosts and other parts of the chickenhouse.

Spraying

Use one of the following: an oil solution or water suspension or emulsion containing 1 percent of malathion; a water suspension containing 0.5 percent of carbaryl or 0.25 percent of coumaphos; or an emulsion containing 0.3 percent of

Spraying interior
of chickenhouse.

PN-797



naled. Mix according to directions on the insecticide container.

Apply sprays with a small power sprayer or a garden-type compressed-air sprayer. Spray thoroughly on roosts and other parts of the chickenhouse.

Carbaryl may be used at 0.5-percent strength (in water) in a mist spray in poultry houses to treat floor litter and birds. Do not treat nest litter directly. Follow instructions on the label.

Painting

Prepare a painting solution by mixing insecticide with kerosene, diesel oil, or water. Use a mixture containing 3 percent of malathion. Follow directions on the insecticide container.

Apply with a brush to roosts and other interior parts of the chickenhouse. One pint of the mixture should cover about 150 feet of roost.

A nicotine sulfate solution containing 40 percent of nicotine is also recommended for painting roosts.

Dusting

Use a 4- or 5-percent malathion dust, or a 5-percent carbaryl dust, or a 0.5-percent coumaphos dust to treat litter and roosts. One pound will treat about 40 square feet of litter. Do not treat nest litter with carbaryl. Do not use carbaryl less than 7 days before slaughter.



Painting
the roosts.

PN-798

PRECAUTIONS

Insecticides are poisonous to man and animals. Use them only when needed and handle them with care. Follow the directions and heed all precautions on the labels. Do not exceed recommended strengths.

Keep insecticides in closed, well-labeled containers in a dry place. Store them where they will not contaminate food or feed, and where children and pets cannot reach them. Do not spray or dust near feed or water troughs.

When handling or mixing concentrates of insecticide, wear clean, dry clothing. If you spill insecticide on your clothing, remove clothing at once and launder before wearing it again.

Avoid repeated or prolonged contact of insecticide with your skin. Avoid spilling insecticide concentrate on your skin, and keep it out of your eyes, nose, and mouth. If you spill any on your skin, wash it off immediately with soap and water.

After handling insecticide, do not eat, drink, or smoke until you have washed your hands and face. Wash your hands and face and other exposed skin immediately after applying insecticide.

Do not inhale insecticide dusts or mists. Provide ventilation when using dusts or sprays inside a building.

To protect honey bees, fish, and wildlife, do not contaminate lakes, streams, or ponds with insecticide. Do not clean spraying equipment or dump excess spray material near such water.

Avoid drift of insecticide to bee hives and nearby crops or livestock.

Dispose of empty pesticide containers at a sanitary land-fill dump, or bury them at least 18 inches deep in a level, isolated place where they will not contaminate water supplies.



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Use Pesticides Safely
FOLLOW THE LABEL
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